

New Testament Textual Criticism from the Margins to the Centre: Jesus' Desire and Manuscripts in Lk 22:43–44

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L'histoire ne peut devenir ni objet décidable, ni totalité maîtrisable, précisément parce qu'elle est liée à la *responsabilité*, à la *foi* et au *don*.

JACQUES DERRIDA, *Donner la mort*



1 Introduction: from the Margins to the Centre*

In 2002, Tobias Nicklas criticised the fact that New Testament textual criticism (NTTC) was generally considered only as a ‘Hilfsmittel auf der Suche nach dem “Urtext”’ only as an auxiliary resource in the quest of the *Urtext*.¹ Indeed, when Helmut Koester observed the evolution of New Testament topics in the *Harvard Theological Review* for its 100th birthday, he noticed the disappearance of NTTC in the journal between 1969 and 2006,² apparently considered as a pure pre-step for New Testament (NT) research rather than NT research itself.³

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- 1 T. Nicklas, ‘Zur historischen und theologischen Bedeutung der Erforschung neutestamentlicher Textgeschichte’, in *NTS* 48 (2002/2) 145–158 [145].
- 2 H. Koester, ‘New Testament Scholarship through One Hundred Years of the *Harvard Theological Review*’, in *Harvard Theological Review* 101 (2008) 311–322 [312].
- 3 For the French-speaking NTTC scholarship at the 20th century, see for example L. Vaganay–C.B. Amphoux, *Initiation à la critique textuelle du Nouveau Testament*, Études annexes de la Bible de Jérusalem (Paris: 1986; reprint Cambridge: 2010); J. Duplacy, *Études de critique textuelle du Nouveau Testament*, BETL 78 (Leuven: 1987); J. Heimerdinger, ‘La foi de l’Éthiopien: le problème textuel d’Actes 8/37’, *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 63/4 (1988) 521–528; R. Dupont-Roc, ‘La transmission du texte de Luc-Actes dans l’Antiquité’, in L. Fatou, *Saint Luc: Évangéliste et historien*, *Dossiers d’archéologie* 279 (Dijon: 2003) 22–33.

However, something has begun to change in the last years, as pointed out by Eldon Epp or Dan Wallace, announcing a 'new era' for the discipline, bringing 'back to life a cadaver'.⁴ In the last decade, notably due to the possibility of searching online for the manuscripts, NTTC is progressively coming back from the NT study margins to the centre of scholarly attention.

This is the case for Codex Bezae, which is entirely digitized on the Cambridge Library website.⁵ Jenny Read-Heimerdinger and Josep Rius-Camps wrote a meaningful work on it. Through their four-volume commentary, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae* (2004–2009),⁶ they brought this codex definitively from the margins to the centre of scholarship. According to the title of this important work, both authors have always been attentive to textual criticism and exegesis when they are together. If manuscripts come out from the margins, the exegesis is deeply transformed, as demonstrated by Jenny Read-Heimerdinger in numerous English and French publications.⁷ But conceptual changes often need a long time before being duly recognized in research. As illustration of this remark, and in tribute to Read-Heimerdinger's work, it is worth remembering the figure of an early 20th century Dutch woman and textual criticism scholar, Adolphine Bakker, author of a 1933 monograph about the Codex Bobbiensis. In the introduction, she expressed the following statement:

When fifty years ago Westcott and Hort published their critical edition of *The New Testament in the original Greek*, it seemed to them and to most other textual critics of the time that the main problem had been solved, and that the textual evolution had proved to be comparatively simple: the 'Neutral' text (represented in the first place by Codex Vaticanus) could safely be assumed to be practically the 'genuine' text, the

4 E.J. Epp, 'It's All about Variants: A Variant-Conscious Approach to New Testament Textual Criticism', *Harvard Theological Review* 100 (2007/3) 275–308 [281]; D.B. Wallace, 'Challenges in New Testament Textual Criticism for the Twenty-First Century', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52 (2009) 79–100 [79]. See C. Clivaz, 'Looking at Scribal Practices in the Endings of Mark 16', *Henoah* 42 (2020/2) 373–387 [373–374].

5 <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-NN-00002-00041/1>; article's hyperlinks have been accessed on 17.03.23.

6 J. Rius-Camps and J. Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts in Codex Bezae. A Comparison with the Alexandrian Tradition*, LNTS 415 (London–New York: 2004–2009).

7 See for example this fine 2012 article: J. Read-Heimerdinger, "Qu'y a-t-il dans un nom?" (*Roméo et Juliette* 11, ii). L'importance du nom du village dans Lc 24,13–35', in C. Clivaz, C. Combet-Galland, J.D. Macchi, C. Nihan, *Écritures et réécritures, La reprise interprétative des traditions fondatrices par la littérature biblique et extra-biblique. Cinquième colloque international du RRENAB, Universités de Genève et Lausanne, 10–12 juin 2010*, BETL 248 (Leuven–Paris: 2012) 595–611.

'Antiochian' being a secondary revision. There remained only what they called the 'Western' text, 'a rather miscellaneous band of authorities'⁸ of which Codex Bezae and the Old Syriac and Old Latin Versions were the main representatives. Hort called this 'Western' text 'by far the most licentious';⁹ a qualification which virtually put that part of the textual evidence out of scholarly control. Since, however, the situation has been entirely changed. [...] One thing seems clear beyond dispute: that the 'Western' text is not one homogeneous entity, but is composed of more or less disparate groups which must be studied both separately and in their mutual relation. One of the most important groups is that of the Old Latin tradition. This justifies a re-examination of the central witness of this group, codex ev. Bobbiensis (*k*) in which, if anywhere, the key should be found for the Old Latin textual problem.¹⁰

This ninety-year old statement reminds us that the superiority of the so-called 'Neutral text' has always been discussed, but Bakker's wise words have been quite inefficient for decades. However, the progressive abandonment of the model of big types of text is now on its way, as underlined by Tommy Wasserman and Peter Gurry: 'The rejection of the concept of text-types as a means of understanding the history of the text is significant. What fruit this will bear in the long term remains to be seen.'¹¹ The manuscripts' digitalization fosters this evolution: 'Because the computer can keep track of all these witnesses and their place in the transmission, there is no need to group them into a few text-types and relate these groups.'¹² As we can see, the NTTC new era announced by Epp and Wallace has some stormy aspects. In this evolving landscape, the work

8 A. Bakker notes that the expression is borrowed from Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, *Recent developments in the textual criticism of the Greek Bible* (London: 1933) 64 (A.H.A. Bakker, *A Study of Codex Evang. Bobbiensis (k)*, Part I [Amsterdam: 1933] 1, fn 1).

9 Bakker does not give the exact reference of this quotation. It stands in B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the original Greek. Introduction and appendix to the text revised by the editors* (New York: 1882) 178: 'The main line of neutral and comparatively pure text was from an early time surrounded and over-shadowed by two powerful lines containing much aberration, the 'Western' being by far the most licentious and the most widely spread, and the Alexandrian being formed by skillful but mostly petty corrections which left the neutral text untouched, at all events in the Gospels and Pauline Epistles, except in a very small proportion of its words'.

10 Bakker, *A Study*, 1–2.

11 T. Wasserman and P.J. Gurry, *A New Approach to Textual Criticism: An Introduction to the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method*, Resources for Biblical Study 80 (Atlanta: 2017) 16. For a discussion, see C. Clivaz, *Écritures digitales. Digital writing, Digital Scriptures*, DBS 4 (Leuven: 2019) 174–182.

12 Wasserman–Gurry, *A New Approach*, 14.

of Jenny Read-Heimerdinger strongly contributed to the emergence of alternative voices, in the spirit of Bakker's heritage. In tribute to her, I have chosen in this article to give an example of how the exegesis is benefiting from NTTC when underestimated manuscripts come from the shadows to the light.

After the publication of my 2010 monograph about Lk 22:43–44,¹³ scholarly production about this variant has stayed vigorous in the last decade, as analysed in detail elsewhere.¹⁴ Two new major steps in the appreciation of Lk 22:43–44 can be recognized. On the one hand, the external evidence file is reconsidered,¹⁵ particularly in Egypt in the second and third century CE, thanks to a renewed attention to 0171 and P⁶⁹. Uncial 0171 was dated in 2012 to the end of the second century or early third century by Willy Clarysse and Pasquale Orsini, antedating P⁷⁵,¹⁶ whereas P⁶⁹ attests to an omission starting at Lk 22:42, an alternative voice.¹⁷ On the other hand, the literary argument of the chiasmus in Lk 22:39–46—a core argument of Bart Ehrman and Mark Allan Plunkett's 1983 milestone article¹⁸—has been abandoned by almost all scholars,¹⁹ and has been declared solved by Lincoln Blumell.²⁰

Taking these two points further, I will demonstrate in this article how a narrative reading of the Lukan prayer at Gethsemane can be supported by the reconsideration of the early attestations of Lk 22:43–44. The three different readings attested in 0171 (with Lk 22:43–44), P⁷⁵ (without Lk 22:43–44) and P⁶⁹

13 C. Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang, Lc 22,43–44, ou comment on pourrait bien encore écrire l'histoire*, BiTS 7 (Leuven: 2010). This book was carefully prepared for publication by J. Read-Heimerdinger as former collaborator at the University of Lausanne (CH).

14 See for a complete last decade's state of the art and analysis: c (2023/3–4).

15 In the external evidence file, the case of *f*¹³ with Codex C has been clarified, as well as the evaluation of Codex 8, and Codex A evidence (see Clivaz, 'Judeo-Christian Memories', forthcoming). About Lk 22:43–44 in *f*¹³, see notably D. Lafleur, 'Which Criteria for Family 13 (*f*¹³) Manuscripts?', *NovT* 54/2 (2012) 105–148; [115–117, 142]; T. van Lopik, 'Some Notes on the *Pericope Adulterae* in Byzantine Liturgy', in H.A.G. Houghton, *Liturgy and the Living Text of the New Testament* (Leiden: 2018) 151–176 [155].

16 P. Orsini and W. Clarysse, 'Early New Testament Manuscripts and their Dates: A Critique of Theological Paleography', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 88/4 (2012) 443–474 [466].

17 See C. Clivaz, 'The Angel and the Sweat Like 'Drops of Blood' (Luke 22:43–44): P⁶⁹ and *f*¹³', *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005/4) 419–440, and the next discussion steps summarized in Part 3 below.

18 B.D. Ehrman and M.A. Plunkett, 'The Angel and the Agony: The Textual Problem of Luke 22:43–44', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983/3) 401–416 [412–414].

19 As exception see J.T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary* (Louisville: 2012) 444–445.

20 L. Blumell, 'Luke 22:43–44: An Anti-Docetic Interpolation or an Apologetic Omission?', *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 19 (2014) 1–35; 33: 'Chiasmus cannot be used as a decisive indicator against the authenticity of vv. 43 and 44 (or for their authenticity for that matter) and on the whole does not constitute a very persuasive text-critical argument'.

(without Lk 22:42–44[45a]) confirm the presence of a narrative tension around Jesus' desire in the Lukan pericope, beyond the consideration of 22:43–44 as interpolation or omission (Part 3). I will start with a narrative analysis of Jesus' program in Lk 22:39–46 (Part 2).

2 Jesus' Desire in the Lukan Prayer at Gethsemane: A Narrative Reading

Even before we look at the manuscripts, the different canonical versions of the pericope speak for themselves: the scene was an ambiguous episode for the earliest Christian communities. The later Gospel of John simply does not report it in wording that expresses reticence about the words about the cup (John 12:27), whereas the Gospel of Luke is usually seen as 'lowering the Markan' scene, as expressed by Kurt O. Sandnes in 2015:

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus returns to the disciples three times and prays three times. In Luke's shorter version, this is all mentioned only once, which certainly focuses the matter, but also makes it evident that according to that version, Jesus' struggle did not last very long. The intensity is absent, and he embraces God's plan more easily.²¹

But such a point of view fails to notice that only Matthew standardized the scene with an explicit triple prayer and an identical content (Matt 26:39.42.44), whereas Mark explicitly narrates Jesus' prayer only twice (Mark 14:37.39). The third prayer and its content are assumed in Mark, but are not narrated. Moreover, Codex Bezae, Bobbiensis and Vercellensis (D, k and a) confirm the divergence between Mark and Matthew, omitting even the content of the second prayer in Mark by removing the words τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον εἰπῶν in Mark 14:39. Consequently, the dual opposition of Luke vs Mark and Matthew is incorrect. While Matthew standardizes the content of a triple prayer, Mark does not mention the content of the third prayer and even that of the second prayer in D, k, and a. On the other hand, Luke focuses attention on the content of one prayer (Lk 22:42), followed by a second prayer whose content is not mentioned, if one considers Lk 22:43–44.

These open spaces in the canonical versions of the prayer at Gethsemane invite consideration of what Luke's version tells us from its own narrative

21 K.O. Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses on Jesus' Prayer at Gethsemane. Courageous, Committed, Cowardly?* (Leiden: 2015) 163.

perspective. The chiasmus argument focuses on Lk 22:42, as Blumell summarizes it: 'Ehrman has repeatedly asserted that Luke 22:40–46 forms a chiasm where v. 42 (Jesus prays) functions as the centrepiece and that vv. 43 and 44 are intrusive to the chiasmic structure and therefore ought to be regarded as secondary'.²² In addition to all the reservations expressed in the last years about the chiasmus argument, now largely abandoned,²³ narrative criticism allows such a consideration in a fresh light of the structure of the whole chapter 22. Lk 22:15 and 22:42b together describe the narrative program of Jesus in tension between his desire and his will.²⁴

Source criticism usually reads as a closure to Lk 22:38 based on the symposium literary genre,²⁵ with the 'start of Jesus' suffering' in 22:39, proposed notably by Raymond Brown.²⁶ But the expression *πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν* in Lk 22:15 demonstrates that Jesus' suffering had already started. He wished to share a supper with his disciples *before* suffering, but, alas, the hand of the betrayer is already on the table. This discrepancy in the timelines provokes Jesus' cry of desperation, with these sonorous Greek words: Πλὴν ἰδοὺ ... πλὴν οὐαὶ (Lk 22:21–22). The bread is shared, the cup has circulated, *sauf que*²⁷ (πλὴν) the hand of the betrayer is simultaneously on the table.²⁸ The interweaving of the

22 Blumell, 'Luke 22:43–44', 32.

23 Blumell notes that it has been largely demonstrated that a chiasmus can include Luke 22:43–44 (Feldkämper, Gamba), or that these verses do not disturb the alleged chiasmus in 22:39–46 (Brown); my 2010 critics of the concept of chiasm itself is for him a 'welcome forthright assessment' (see Blumell, 'Luke 22:43–44', 32–33 and Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur*, 256–263).

24 The three next paragraphs summarize in English elements of the French demonstration published in Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang*, 365–410. With the kind permission of Luc Peeters, publisher.

25 See the milestone works of H. Schürmann, 'Der Abendmahlsbericht Lk 22,7–38 als Gottesdienstordnung, Gemeindeordnung, Lebensordnung', in H. Schürmann, *Ursprung und Gestalt: Erörterungen und Besinnungen zum neuen Testament*, Kommentare und Beiträge zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Düsseldorf: 1970) 108–150; A. Vööbus, *The Prelude to the Lukan Passion Narrative: Tradition-, Redaction-, Cult-, Motif-, Historical and Source-Critical Studies*, Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile 5/17 (Stockholm: 1968).

26 R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: 1998) 37: 'Passion means suffering, and Jesus' "agony in the garden" marks the beginning of his suffering which leads to the finale of his death and burial'. But F. Bovon proposed to consider Lk 22:15–46 as one source (F. Bovon, 'Le récit lucanien de la passion de Jésus [Lc 22–23]', in C. Focant, *The Synoptic Gospels. Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism*, BETL 110 [Leuven: 1993] 393–423).

27 The French word *sauf* transcribes here exactly the meaning of the Greek πλὴν.

28 See C. Clivaz, 'Douze noms pour une main: nouveaux regards sur Judas à partir de Lc 22.21–22', *NTS* 48 (2002/2) 400–416.

supper and the prayer on the Mount of Olives are confirmed by the narrative structure of the entire chapter 22: Lk 22:1–62 presents a unifying narrative sequence, limited by two summaries, Lk 21:37–38 that draws a geographical space—in and out of the town, and Lk 22:63–65 that signals the end of the night, a temporal indicator. The temporal dimension of the night is progressively introduced from the beginning of the chapter, in three steps: the feast (22:1), the day (22:7) and the hour itself (22:14).

The interweaving of the geographical and temporal dimensions in the chapter invites to mitigate the break after 22:38: the hour of Jesus' arrest, which starts in 22:14, ends only in 22:54, with the final summary 22:63–65 which describes the mockeries and violence going on throughout the night, until the daybreak (22:66). Moreover, while in Mk 14:26 and Matt 26:30 the last supper concludes peacefully with the song of the psalms, there is no 'happy supper ending' in Luke. Instead, Jesus goes out after an abrupt 'that's enough' (22:38), and the disciples 'follow him' (22:39). The scene continues outside of the town, according to the geographical framework enounced in 21:37–38—in and out of the town. In the overhanging narrative sequence 22:1–62, the narrative program of Jesus is stated a first time in 22:8 as τὸ πάσχα ἵνα φάγωμεν, 'in order that we eat the Passover supper', and is reformulated in 22:15 with an emotional expression, ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα. In 22:8, at that point in the story, Jesus has the know-how and the ability (*savoir-faire* and *pouvoir-faire*) to perform this program (22:10–13), as well as the will (*vouloir-faire*, in 22:9, ποῦ θέλεις ἐτοιμάσωμεν;). However, the obligation (*devoir-faire*) is inscribed in the temporal framework of the narrative sequence, in the expression the day 'on which the Passover had to be sacrificed' ([ἐν] ἧ ἔδει θύεσθαι τὸ πάσχα, 22:7). This day *must* happen and is not in the hands of the characters: it belongs anonymously to the narrative temporal framework. This element is even more striking that all the other occurrences of δεῖ are told by Jesus in the Passion announcements (9:22, 13:33, 17:25 and 22:37).

The time inexorably running and the mandatory aspect of the Passover's hour place pressure on Jesus' narrative program. When this supper could be accomplished, around the table, it is imperfect and partly delayed because of the presence of Judas. His hand already performs the betrayal on the table. When Jesus cries πλὴν ἰδοὺ ... πλὴν οὐαὶ (Lk 22:21–22), the reader understands that Jesus' narrative program, reformulated in 22:15, has been partly delayed. In 22:15, after the hour starts, Jesus had expressed his will in a very special way in 22:15: 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer' (ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν). The meaning of ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα, a New Testament hapax, is literally 'I desired with an intense desire', likely an allusion to Jacob in Gen 31:30 LXX: Laban declares that

Jacob has 'desired with great desire' (ἐπιθυμία γὰρ ἐπεθύμησας) coming back to his father, also a delayed desire.²⁹ Leaving in an abrupt way to Gethsemane in 22:39, Jesus faces the tension raised by his ἐπιθυμία partly delayed. He finally reformulates his will and narrative program in Lk 22:42b: 'yet not my will, but yours be done'.

The narrative program of Jesus' desire and emotions throughout chapter 22, illustrated by the specific expression in 22:15, makes it difficult to understand how Susanna Asikainen can still³⁰ affirm the description of Jesus without emotions in Luke in her 2018 monograph. Aside from the case of Lk 22:43–44, she considers indeed that 'Luke omits the mentions of Jesus' emotions elsewhere in the Gospel as well'.³¹ However, she ignores Jesus ἐπιθυμία in Luke 22:15 and does not engage with emotional passages such as Luke 12:50 or 23:46, only commenting on the exception of the tears of Jesus in Luke 19:41 as 'problematic from the point of view of the Stoic ideal of self-control'.³² Such a unilateral reassessment of a Jesus 'without emotions' in Luke remains an exception in the last decade scholarship, which acknowledges the emotional tone of the word about the cup.³³ As Blumell summarizes it:

While there is certainly a tendency to minimize Jesus' emotions in Luke, it is not as widespread as some commentators have alleged [...]. Jesus still entreats the Father to 'remove this cup' (v. 42), which at least shows some degree of anxiety about his impending fate.³⁴

This observation is comforted on the one hand by the narrative analysis, summarized in Part 2, and on the other hand by the earliest manuscript evidence of the Lukan prayer at Gethsemane which demonstrates a plural reception of Lk 22:39–46 at an early period in Egypt.

29 Lk 22:15 is closer to Gen 31:30 LXX than to Nb 11:4; see Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang*, 397.

30 See previously for example: J.H. Neyrey, 'The Absence of Jesus' Emotions—The Lukan Redaction of Luke 22:39–46', *Biblica* 61 (1980) 153–171; Ehrman–Plunkett, 'The Angel'; G. Sterling, 'Mors philosophi: The Death of Jesus in Luke', *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001/4) 383–402; P. Scaer, *The Lukan Passion and the Praiseworthy Death* (Sheffield: 2005); R.A. Culpepper, 'Designs for the Church in the Gospel Accounts of Jesus' Death', *NTS* 51 (2005) 376–339.

31 S. Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men. Ideal Masculinities in the Synoptic Gospels* (Leiden: 2018) 165.

32 Asikainen, *Jesus and Other Men*, 147.

33 See, as representants of this new trend, Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses*, 12 and 134, and Blumell below.

34 Blumell, 'Luke 22:43–44', 33–34.

3 When the Manuscripts Evidence File Echoes to the Narrative Reading: 0171, P⁷⁵ and P⁶⁹

An important shift is progressively on its way in the research about Lk 22:43–44. As signalled in Part 1, Willy Clarysse and Pasquale Orsini have dated GA 0171 from of the end of the second century or early third century,³⁵ a turning-point underlined by Blumell in 2014.³⁶ Discussing the updated case of 0171 elsewhere,³⁷ I remember here that it contains Lk 22:44. Predating P⁷⁵ and P⁶⁹, 0171 opens new perspectives on plural traditions of Lk 22:39–46 at a very early stage. This early diversity helps to understand Codex \aleph evidence (\aleph^{*2} with Luke 22:43–44; \aleph^1 without), or why Codex A does not have the two verses but gives the indication *prima manu* from the Eusebian canon in the f. 63^v margin for Luke 22:43–44, directly after Luke 22:42.³⁸

In parallel, the high valuation of P⁷⁵ as representant of a pure text has been critically analysed for several years;³⁹ moreover, Brent Nongbri has recently argued in favour of a fourth century date based on the comparison with P. Herm. 4 and 5.⁴⁰ Even without sharing this later date, P⁷⁵ can hardly be considered still as a pure witness fortunately saved from the forgetting of the past. Uncial 0171 and P⁷⁵, considered together, show that the content of the Lukan prayer on the Mount of Olives was at stake in Egypt during the 2nd–3rd centuries. P⁶⁹ (or P. Oxy. 2383) increases the case by presenting a third version, as recent developments of scholarship support it. Dated to the middle of the third century and first edited by Turner in 1957,⁴¹ it has been discussed in detail by Kurt Aland in 1987,⁴² and was republished in 2001 by Comfort and Bar-

35 Orsini–Clarysse, ‘Early New Testament Manuscripts’, 466.

36 Blumell, ‘Luke 22:43–44’, 5–6.

37 Clivaz, ‘Luke 22:43–44 and Judeo-Christian Memories’, *forthcoming*.

38 This point has been noticed in 1894 in F.A.H. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (London: 1894⁴) 353–354. It has been confirmed by J. Geerlings, *Family II in Luke* (Salt Lake City: 1962) 4. See Clivaz, *L’ange et la sueur*, 459–460, and Blumell: ‘There is also a deliberate space between v. 42 and v. 45’ (Blumell, ‘Luke 22:43–44’, 7, fn 23). Examples of Codex A simply quoted as an omission witness: Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses*, 149; earlier, J. Duplacy, ‘La préhistoire du texte’, 356.

39 Clivaz, *L’ange et la sueur de sang*, 467–480.

40 B. Nongbri, ‘Reconsidering the Place of Papyrus Bodmer XIV–XV (P75) in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135 (2016/2) 405–437; idem, *God’s Library. The Archeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts* (New Haven–London: 2018) 202–203.

41 E.G. Turner, ‘2383. Gospel According to St. Luke XXII’, in E. Lobel et al., *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXIV* (London: 1957) 1–4.

42 K. Aland, ‘Alter und Entstehung des D-Textes im Neuen Testament. Betrachtungen zu P⁶⁹

rett.⁴³ After my 2005 article on this topic,⁴⁴ a third edition was proposed by Thomas Wayment in 2008, based on multispectral images produced in 2006.⁴⁵ Wayment updated his edition in 2015⁴⁶ after some scholarly debate.⁴⁷

However, P⁶⁹ remains not well known among New Testament exegetes, probably because it is not mentioned in the NA²⁸ critical apparatus. In the recent literature about Lk 22:43–44, it is ignored by Carroll or Sandnes,⁴⁸ or is quoted as an example of the absence of Luke 22:43–44 by Ramelli.⁴⁹ S.K. Brown details that P⁶⁹ presents a third tradition about the Lukan prayer on the Mount of Olives but quotes an incorrect gap starting with v. 41 instead of v. 42.⁵⁰ It is important to note, along with Turner, that in P⁶⁹, ‘the ink is almost effaced, and the text is readable only with difficulty’.⁵¹ It can nevertheless be used as a particular witness to the Lukan prayer at Gethsemane: *all editions indeed agree that its gap starts with the omission of the saying on the cup (v. 42).*

Turner, followed by Aland, and then Comfort and Barrett, have noted a gap in Luke 22:42–45a,⁵² whereas Wayment ends the gap at v. 44, including 22:45a in his reconstruction, with two pointed letters.⁵³ The NTVMR proposes a balance between these two options by substituting 45a in brackets, without pointed letters (P⁶⁹ recto l. 4).⁵⁴ Wayment’s change is also based on his reading of the precedent line, P⁶⁹ recto l. 5: ελθων προς τους] μαθητας και,⁵⁵ instead of ρεν

und 0171, in S. Janeras and R. Roca-Puig, *Miscellània papiròlogica* (Barcelona: 1987) 37–61. Turner’s edition is reproduced on pages 49–50.

43 P.W. Comfort and D.P. Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts* (Cambridge: 2001) 471–472.

44 Clivaz, ‘The Angel and the Sweat’.

45 T.A. Wayment, ‘A New Transcription of P. Oxy. 2383 (P⁶⁹)’, *NovT* 50/3 (2008) 351–357.

46 L. Blumell and T.A. Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, Sources* (Waco: 2015) 38–41.

47 C. Clivaz, ‘Some Remarks on T.A. Wayment, “A New Transcription of P. Oxy. 2383 (P⁶⁹)”’, *NovT* 52/1 (2010) 83–87; T.A. Wayment, ‘P.Oxy. 2383 (P⁶⁹) One More Time’, *NovT* 54/3 (2012) 288–292.

48 Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, 444; Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses*, 149.

49 I. Ramelli, ‘ΚΟΙΜΩΜΕΝΟΥΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΛΥΠΗΣ (Lk 22:45): A Deliberate Change’, *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 102 (2011/1) 59–76 [62].

50 See S.K. Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, chapter 22 [n. p., electronic edition]: ‘Recent studies on P⁶⁹, a fragmentary text from the third century (held at Oxford) that preserves only a few verses from Luke 22 and omits verses 41–44 instead of just verses 43–44, illustrate that some early texts of these verses are in flux and unsettled’.

51 Turner, ‘2383’, 1.

52 Turner, ‘2383’, 2; Aland, ‘Alter und Entstehung’, 57; Comfort–Barrett, *The Text*, 464.

53 Wayment, ‘A New Transcription’, 352.

54 P⁶⁹ recto: <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10069&pageID=10>.

55 Wayment, ‘A New Transcription’, 352. The μ is pointed.

αυτους καθευ]δοντας κοι (Turner, Comfort and Barrett).⁵⁶ Everyone can consult P⁶⁹ recto's multispectral image on the *POxy: Oxyrhynchus Online* website.⁵⁷ We can reasonably agree with Wayment's reading of l. 5. It allows us to limit the gap in Luke 22:42–44. However, *whatever gap's end one chooses, it clearly starts after v. 41*,⁵⁸ an element that deserves to be more generally acknowledged in the discussion of the evidence of Luke 22:43–44.

If Turner was convinced of a homoioteleuton effect to explain the gap,⁵⁹ Kurt Aland demonstrated thirty years later that 'die Auslassung von 42–45a hat keine mechanischen Ursachen (von Homoioteleuton usw. findet sich keine Spur); es handelt sich hier auch nicht um Flüchtigkeit oder Versehen, sondern um *bewusstes Handeln*',⁶⁰ is a *conscious action*. In his 2015 revised edition, Wayment chose to leave this point open-ended,⁶¹ but he misses an opportunity to refer to Aland's 1987 article.⁶² Aland convincingly argues that P⁶⁹ acts at discretion, expanding, shortening, changing, or switching elements, in a paraphrastic manner.⁶³ Moreover, Aland drew attention to the P⁶⁹ second special feature in Luke 22:61. Peter looks at Jesus—not Jesus to Peter.⁶⁴ P⁶⁹ represents a third way to transmit the Lukan prayer on the Mount of Olives.⁶⁵

In a 2005 article, I tried to understand it as a fragment of Marcion's Gospel, a hypothesis suggested to me by François Bovon.⁶⁶ This proposal raised enthusiasm for some Marcionite scholars, in order that P⁶⁹ stands even on the cover of Jason David BeDuhn's 2013 book.⁶⁷ However, I consider that Dieter Roth has well understood my argument: 'Claire Clivaz [...] has cautiously suggested that P⁶⁹ is a fragment of Marcion's redaction of Luke. In my estimation, however, this view cannot be accepted as it rests entirely on an argument from silence;

56 Turner, '2383', 2; Aland, 'Alter und Entstehung', 57; Comfort–Barrett, *The Text*, 464. The NTVMR follows Wayment for recto l. 5 (P⁶⁹ recto: <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10069&pageID=10>).

57 P⁶⁹ recto: <http://163.1.169.40/gsdll/collect/POxy/index/assoc/HASH012f.dir/POxy.v0024.n2383.a.01.hires.jpg>.

58 The withdrawing of 45a is not significant at the textual criticism level, since found in other liturgical evidence (Clivaz, 'The Angel and the Sweat', 427–428; Lopik, 'Some notes', 155).

59 Turner, '2383', 3 fn 4.

60 Aland, 'Alter und Entstehung', 59. See Clivaz, 'The Angel and the Sweat', 426–427.

61 Blumell–Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 39.

62 No mention of Aland's 1987 article in Wayment, 'P.Oxy. 2383 (P⁶⁹)' or Blumell–Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*.

63 Aland, 'Alter und Entstehung', 59–60.

64 Aland, 'Alter und Entstehung', 59.

65 Clivaz, 'The Angel and the Sweat', 427; Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang*, 467.

66 Clivaz, 'The Angel and the Sweat', 429–432.

67 J.D. BeDuhn, *The First New Testament. Marcion's Scriptural Canon* (Salem: 2013).

the verses Clivaz considers are unattested for Marcion's Gospel.⁶⁸ As Blumell summarizes it, 'while Epiphanius comments on Marcion's rendering of Luke 22:41 and then 22:47b (*Pan.* 42.11.65–66), it cannot be automatically assumed that Marcion's version did not contain anything from Luke 22:42–47a on this evidence alone.'⁶⁹

It should nevertheless be underlined that, in this passage, Epiphanius relies only on v. 41 to argue in favour of Jesus' humanity. Thus, 'we may conclude that if Epiphanius had found the passages about the cup (Luke 22:42) or the angel and the sweat like drops of blood (Luke 22:43–44) in the copy of Marcion's gospel that he consulted, he would have based his argument for Jesus' humanity on both or either of those passages, instead of on the account of Jesus' kneeling in Luke 22:41.'⁷⁰ Marcion's writing, 'with a knife', according to Tertullian's word (*Praescriptio* 38.7–9), could represent a plausible framework to understand the content of P⁶⁹,⁷¹ but unless we obtain new information about Marcion and Gethsemane, I agree with Roth that it remains impossible to confirm this hypothesis. Consequently, I have been surprised to discover P⁶⁹ on BeDuhn's cover, an association that he validates, considering my arguments as superfluous.⁷² BeDuhn even quotes P⁶⁹ next to Epiphanius as evidence of Gethsemane in Marcion's gospel.⁷³ He also announces a forthcoming article on P⁶⁹—apparently not published until now. Then, in a 2017 article, he still mentions P⁶⁹ as a Marcionite source, but only passing through.⁷⁴

68 D.T. Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel* (Leiden: 2015) 46, fn 1. Other scholars have expressed doubts about this association (M. Klinghardt, *Das älteste Evangelium und die Entstehung der kanonischen Evangelien. Band 2: Rekonstruktion, Übersetzung, Varianten* [Tübingen: 2020] 1039–1040) or did not comment it (C. Gianotto and A. Nicolotti, *Il vangelo di Marcione* [Torino: 2019]). In a recent article on Marcion and the Nestle Aland²⁸, Roth does not mention P⁶⁹ (D.T. Roth, 'The Testimony for Marcion's Gospel in NA²⁸: Revisiting the Apparatus to Luke in the Light of Recent Research', *NTS* 68/1 [2022] 52–60).

69 Blumell, 'Luke 22:43–44', 8, fn 33.

70 Clivaz, 'The Angel and the Sweat', 430.

71 Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang*, 467.

72 BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, 41–42, 341, fn 73. See in the same way a self-published book by M.G. Bilby, *The First Gospel, the Gospel of the Poor: A New Reconstruction of Q and Resolution of the Synoptic Problem based on Marcion's Early Luke* (self-published book LODLIB v1.52. 2021, doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3927056) 653, fn 701. Bilby does not mention P⁶⁹ in a 2021 article: M.G. Bilby, 'Normalized Datasets of Harnack's Reconstruction of Marcion's Gospel', *Journal of Open Humanities Data* 7:24 (2021) 1–7.

73 J.D. BeDuhn, *The First New Testament*, p. 187.

74 J.D. BeDuhn, 'New Studies on Marcion's *Evangelion*', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 21/1 (2017) 8–24 [9].

Looking at this circumscribed scholarly effervescence, I would argue here again for the plausibility of P⁶⁹, but the ‘Marcionite or not’ debate is not necessary to validate P⁶⁹ having its own voice. Whether or not the source of P⁶⁹ included vv. 43–44, the plausibility of a conscious omission of v. 42 can be supported first by the canonical gospels themselves. If we put in balance the synoptic tradition about the prayer at Gethsemane and the Gospel of John—which avoids narrating Gethsemane and distances itself from this tradition (John 12:27)—, P⁶⁹ would represent a middle way: the prayer on the Mount of Olives, but without its content, the saying on the cup. Second, the history of the reception makes this Gethsemane version understandable, at least for third-century Egypt. In 2010, I illustrated how problematic the saying of the cup has been for the first century’s reception history,⁷⁵ until the point that Origen developed a special understanding of it: Jesus would ask his father for a sourer cup—a ‘crueler martyrdom’—to save more people.⁷⁶ The presence of an early Christian reluctance to this saying has recently been validated and reassessed by Sandnes, Wilson, and Pope.⁷⁷ Moreover, the withdrawing of Luke 22:42 and the addition to the Luke 22:43–44 case fits well with Celsus’ statement concluding his attack against the prayer at Gethsemane:

Certain of the Christian believers, like persons who in a fit of drunkenness lay violent hands upon themselves, have corrupted the Gospel from its original integrity to a threefold, and fourfold, and many-fold degree, and have remodelled it, so that they might be able to oppose negations to the objections.⁷⁸

In summary of Part 3, the three most ancient witnesses of Lk 22:43–44 demonstrate a plural situation in Egypt in the third century CE. The oldest one, 0171, includes the passage, whereas P⁷⁵ does not have it; as for P⁶⁹, it lacks Luke 22:42–44(45a), a third way to transmit the Lukan prayer on the Mount of Olives. We do not have more ancient manuscripts of Luke 22; therefore, what happened before remains an estimation at best. Scholars now have enough

75 Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang*, 347–364.

76 Origen, *Exhortation to Martyrdom* 29.32–37; see V. Niculescu, ‘Origen in Gethsemane: A View on Origen’s Understanding of his Ever-Candidacy to Martyrdom’, *Adamantius* 6 (2000) 8–25; Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang*, 218–219 and 360–361.

77 Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses*, 158; B.E. Wilson, *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* (Oxford: 2015) 214; M. Pope, ‘Emotions, Pre-emotions, and Jesus’ Comportment in Luke 22:39–42’, *NovT* 62/1 (2020) 25–43, notably 26–28; see previously Clivaz, *L'ange et la sueur de sang*, 355–361.

78 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.27, in H. Chadwick, *Origen. Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: 1980) 341.

evidence to understand the presence of these three versions from third-century Egypt, including Luke 22:44, the most ancient witness. It is clearly a turning point in the evaluation of external evidence on this topic.

4 Conclusion: To the Centre with Narrative Criticism and Textual Criticism

As early reader testimonies, $\text{O}171$, P^{75} and P^{69} confirm that the characterization of Jesus in the Lukan prayer on the Mount of Olives includes emotional features, whatever textual version is considered (Part 3). They also confirm early divergences in the reception of the Lukan prayer at Gethsemane, amplified in the Gospel of John to the point of criticizing the scene (John 12:27) and withdrawing it. The narrative program of Jesus (22:8 and 22:15), considered in the entire narrative sequence of Lk 22:1–62, is made partly impossible or is delayed by the ‘hour of darkness’, already starting in 22:14, with Satan back on the stage in 22:3. The transformation of Jesus’ desire in an obedient prayer in 22:42b explains, on the narrative level, the reception of the scene by early readers and scribes (Part 2).

Combining narrative criticism with the earliest evidence allows for the apparently marginal manuscripts $\text{O}171$ and P^{69} to come back to the centre of the exegetical stage. Together with P^{75} they illustrate the fact that Lk 22:43–44 ‘could have been removed for different reasons at different times.’⁷⁹ Relying on the few ancient manuscripts we have, this variant will certainly continue to create scholarly debates, and the recent discussions about the Lukan prayer on the Mount of Olives show that New Testament textual criticism is back to life. This article hopes to have given an example of the potential of combining New Testament exegesis with the readers information provided to us by early evidence. When underestimated manuscripts come out of the margins, the exegesis is indeed deeply transformed.

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⁷⁹ Blumell, ‘Luke 22:43–44’, 4.

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